67 SPECIAL OPERATION SQUADRON

MISSION

67 Special Operations Squadron operates the MC-130P Combat Shadow and C-130E Hercules aircraft. The aircraft are flown at night using night vision goggles, and provide long-range low-level infiltration, exfiltration, and resupply of special operations forces in hostile or denied territory. The unit also enables combat search and rescue, medical evacuations, and assists with humanitarian operations. The aircraft are uniquely capable of providing clandestine air refueling support to special operations helicopters.

LINEAGE

67 Air Rescue Squadron constituted, 17 Oct 1952
Activated, 14 Nov 1952
Discontinued, and inactivated, 18 Mar 1960
Activated, 10 May 1961
Organized, 18 Jun 1961
Redesignated 67 Air Rescue Squadron, 1 Aug 1965
Redesignated 67 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, 8 Jan 1966
Redesignated 67 Special Operations Squadron, 1 Jun 1988

STATIONS

Sculthorpe RAF Station, England, 14 Nov 1952
Prestwick, Scotland, 7 Nov 1953–18 Mar 1960

Prestwick, Scotland, 18 Jun 1961
Moron AB, Spain, 1 Jul 1966
RAF Woodbridge, England, 15 Jan 1970
RAF Alconbury, England, 1 Apr 1992

DEPLOYED STATIONS
RAF Akrotiri, Cyprus, 13–27 Jun 1976
Incirlik AB, Turkey, 13 Jan–18 Mar 1991 and 6 Apr–10 Jun 1991
Brindisi AB, Italy and Incirlik AB, Turkey, 2 Mar–12 Jul 1993

ASSIGNMENTS
9th Air Rescue Group, 14 Nov 1952
Air Rescue Service, 24 Jun 1958–18 Mar 1960
Military Air Transport Service, 10 May 1961
Air Rescue (later, Aerospace Rescue and Recovery) Service, 18 Jun 1961
Atlantic Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Center (later, 40 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Wing), 8 Apr 1967
39 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery (later, 39 Special Operations) Wing, 17 May 1973 (under operational control of the JCS, 12–27 Jun 1976; attached to Joint Special Operations Task Force: 13 Jan–18 Mar 1991, 6 Apr–10 Jun 1991)
352 Special Operations Group, 1 Dec 1992

ATTACHMENTS
Third Air Force, 15 Nov 1953–24 Jun 1958
Joint Special Operations Task Force, 2 Mar–12 Jul 1993

WEAPON SYSTEMS
SB–29, 1952–1956
C–82, 1952–1953
C–47, 1953–1955
SC–54, 1955–1958
SH–19, 1955–1960
SA–16, 1957–1960
SC–54, 1962
HC–54, 1962–1965, 1966
C–54, 1962–1965
SA–16, 1962
HU–16, 1962–1963
SH–19, 1962
HH–19, 1962–1964
HC–130, 1965
HH–43, 1966–1969, 1970, 1971–1972
HH–3, 1969–1971
HH–53, 1971–1988

COMMANDERS
Lt Col Edward C. Lass, #1953

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers
Southwest Asia
Defense of Saudi Arabia
Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Combat "V" Device
14 Jan–23 Mar 1991

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards
1 Jul 1965–30 Jun 1967
8 Feb 1969–30 Apr 1970
1 May 1971–30 Apr 1972
1 Jul 1972–30 Jun 1974
1 Jul 1976–30 Jun 1978
1 Jul 1978–30 Jun 1980
1 Jun 1985–31 May 1987
24 Mar 1991–31 Jul 1992
1 Aug 1992–31 Jul 1993

Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation
1 Jul 1967–26 Jul 1969

EMBLEM

On a disc Azure, a crescent moon in dexter with two pole stars in chevron middle chief and sinister chief Or, charged with an owl in flight in fess point Brown detailed Sable and eyed Argent, all within a narrow border Yellow. Attached above the disc, a Blue scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed “NIGHT OWLS” in Yellow letters. Attached below the disc, a Blue scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed “67 SOS” in Yellow letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The owl in flight, whose nocturnal performance is unequaled, represents the Squadron’s ability to excel at night. The two stars represent the vital components of the aviation team: operations and maintenance. The crescent moon emphasizes that the unit’s primary activity is at night.

Azure, two mullets of four points in chief bendwise, the sinister diminished by half between in dexter a decresent Or and surmounted in base by a demi-owl issuant from base Gold Brown garnished Gold, all within a diminished bordure of the second.)Approved on 16 Jun 1994; replaced emblem approved, 15 Aug 1985)

MOTTO
NIGHT OWLS

OPERATIONS
Rescue and recovery operations in the European area, including spacecraft recovery in the Atlantic, Oct 1952–Mar 1960 and May 1961–Jun 1988.

During early 1946 Air Transport Command formed Air Rescue Service (ARS) which was the backbone of support for downed airmen both on land and in the sea. Europe was covered by the 7th Air Rescue Squadron based in Tripoli, Libya. Various changes resulted in the activation of 9th Air Rescue Squadron at Bushy Park on 27 February 1951 with three Flights; one at Mansion, Kent; one at Prestwick, Scotland and C Flight at Burtonwood formed on 1 July 1951 with B-17 Flying Fortress aircraft, supported by the odd SC-47 Dakota. The B-17 carried a lifeboat supported under the fuselage that could be dropped into the sea. 9th Air Rescue Squadron became HQ 9 Air Rescue Group on 14 November 1952 and the Flights renumbered:— 66 Air Rescue Squadron at Mansion, 67 Air Rescue Squadron at Prestwick and 68 Air Rescue Squadron at Burtonwood. 68 ARS shortly received Grumman SA-16 Albatross amphibious aircraft and Sikorsky H-19 Helicopters, both extending The capability of The Until considerably. The Iwo helicopters were named "Whirl-o-way and Hop-a-long" joining the Squadron in August 1952.

Despite infrequent flying, there was no lack of harrowing activity around Sculthorpe. In late January 1953, the region was beset by gale force winds that inundated low-lying areas of Kent, Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, and Lincolnshire counties. Literally thousands of families were made homeless by the flood, including personnel from the 47th Bomb Wing residing in the area; seventeen Americans and fifteen British died. One individual, Airman Reis Leming, of the 67th Air Rescue Squadron based at Sculthorpe, personally succored twenty-seven civilians from impending death and received the King George Medal, Britain's highest civilian award. Afterwards, army cooks from the 39th Anti-Aircraft Battalion pitched in to victual the survivors for several days, until they could be safely relocated. Such heroic efforts by Third Air Force personnel did much to cement relations with the nearby populace, who remained favorably disposed towards the Americans, whatever their controversial mission seemed to be. During this storm, gale force winds, measured at 85 knots, had also rattled the aircraft parked at Sculthorpe and four men were assigned to each B-45 to check on them every half-hour. The fact that the Tornados were pointed into the wind with inert 500 pound bombs hanging from their noses to prevent rearing is a good indication of the storm's strength. The only other incident of note occurred on March 9, 1953, when a B-45 tail gunner badly burned himself in a flash fire at high altirude. Thereafter the accident board recommended that smoking be prohibited altogether while airborne in a highly oxygenated environment.


Lt Col Edward C. Lass

An RB-36 declared an emergency over the North Atlantic Ocean south of Iceland. Two engines were on fire, and the crew ditched the plane. The 67th and 68th AR Squadrons responded, located the wreckage, and dropped an A-3 lifeboat to the four survivors. Surface vessels were directed to the scene. 5 Aug 1953

By 1954 the 9th Air Rescue Group and its squadrons covered the Iceland to UK area; The 7th stretched from the Azores to Saudi Arabia and the 12th Central Europe. Under a reorganization the 68th ARS al Burtonwood was absorbed into The 67lh ARS al Prestwick on 18 November 1953. Much later, during 1958, The 66th ARS at Mansion was also absorbed into the Scottish Unit. This ended the basing of rescue units al Burtonwood, the longer range SB-29 and HC-97 taking over.

23 Sep 1962 Atlantic ARC coordinated a major rescue mission for survivors of a civilian C-121 airliner which ditched in the Atlantic Ocean about 675 nautical miles west of Prestwick, Scotland. SC-54 and SA-16 aircraft of the 67th AR Squadron participated in the mission. Survivors were located about four hours after the ditching, and 48 persons were picked up by ships in the area.

31 Jul 1969 An HC-130 assigned to the 67th ARR Squadron was launched from Keflavik in response to a. request from a Norwegian vessel which was sinking about 200 miles north northwest from Bodo, Norway. When the aircraft arrived on the scene, the ship had sunk and 41 persons were in the water. Life rafts were being dropped from a Norwegian PV2. Although eight persons died due to exposure, the United States-Norwegian rescue effort saved 31 lives.

The 67th ARR Squadron participated in the evacuation of United States and friendly foreign nationals from Beirut, Lebanon. HC-130s flew 121.3 hours and HE-53s flew 163.9 hours during this contingency. 10 Jun -2 Jul 1976

HH-53C 68-10368: Ops Loss, Jun 1977, 67 ARRS, Woodbridge AB, UK, no fatalities; Settled with power and crashed during a hurried approach at the airfield; Now a cockpit trainer at Kirtland AFB, NM.

The 67 ARRS was one of 7 rescue squadrons located around the world to provide theater combat and peacetime rescue capability. The squadron was charged with responsibility for an area that stretches from the North to the South Pole and from the Mid-Atlantic to the borders of Burma, an area of approximately 68,000,000 square miles. The roughly 260 men and women of the squadron work with and support the airborne team of 7 HC-130s and 5 HH-53s

1 Jul 87 Detachment 2, 67th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, Ramstein AB, Germany, was inactivated relieving Twenty-Third Air Force of the mission of operational support airlift in Germany. The UH-IN aircraft and personnel of Detachment 2 were reassigned to the 58th Military Airlift Squadron, Ramstein AS, Germany.

Supported special operations forces conducting NATO operations over Northern Iraq, 1991 and 1993.

An Air Force MC-130 was hit by rifle fire during a September flight over Mali, but no airmen were injured on the mission, which was to deliver food and water to Mali troops. The aircraft, which was deployed from the 67th Special Operations Squadron at RAF Mildenhall, U.K., returned to the Mali capital of Bamako with minor fuselage damage, Stars and Stripes reported. The crew was in the country as part of an exercise called Flintlock 2007, when they were asked to fly supplies to Mali troops surrounded by armed fighters at a base in the Tin-Zaouatene region, near the border with Algeria. The attack was believed to have been perpetrated by indigenous Taureg rebels who have been fighting the Mali government for several years, according to US European Command officials. The rebels are not linked to al Qaeda or related groups.2007

An MC-130P Combat Shadow assigned to the 67th Special Operations Squadron flew the type's final UK-based sortie in late January. The aircraft visited several former squadron haunts on its way out. "We were able to take the airplane to all the fields that the 67th SOS has been stationed at in the United Kingdom," said pilot and squadron assistant ops director Lt. Col. Scott Hartman in a release. Currently based at RAF Mildenhall, England, the crew flew over former 67th SOS bases at RAF Sculthorpe, RAF Prestwick, RAF Woodbridge, and RAF Alconbury, refueling a CV-22 Osprey en-route on Jan. 24. Although many of the airfields are now closed, "it was a great chance to get a feel for the long history that the 67th has had here in the UK," added Hartman. Mildenhall is swapping its legacy MC-130Ps for Commando IIs as part of Air Force Special Operations Command's overall Herc fleet upgrade 2014

RAF Mildenhall; Pre-flight briefs, heavy cargo loads, drop zone statistics, personnel guidance, aircraft and equipment inspections – a few of the many crucial steps it took Airmen from the

352nd Special Operations Wing to execute a Maritime Craft Aerial Delivery System drop Sept. 27, 2016.

As part of the combined, joint-force exercise Night Hawk, these Airmen worked alongside Danish air commandos and a U.S. Navy Special Warfare Combatant-Craft unit to perform two MCADS drops, bundle deployments and air commando jumps over Little Belt Strait in Denmark.

"A lot of work goes into a drop like this, but we routinely work with partner nations in order to hone our ability to work together in an operational environment and build on the relationships we have developed over years," said Maj. Andrew Pickering, a 352nd SOW MC-130J Commando II pilot and mission commander.

Mission planning, which began weeks prior, led up to successful cargo loads on Stuttgart Air Base, Germany. Loadmasters and crew chiefs of an MC-130J Commando II, assigned to the 67th Special Operations Squadron, worked with Navy crewmen to load two rigid inflatable boats and a bundle onto the aircraft. The RIBs were strategically loaded, inspected and re-inspected in preparation for the MCADS drop the following day.

“The MCADS requires a different type of coordination between the crew and users as far as how it’s executed compared to a standard heavy equipment drop,” said Staff Sgt. Christopher Jones, a 67th SOS loadmaster.

Tech. Sgt. Adam Phelan, a 752nd Special Operations Group MC-130J Commando II evaluator loadmaster, said the MCADS mission poses unique challenges.

“It’s challenging because it’s a combination airdrop (that includes) heavy equipment in conjunction with personnel, utilizing a 20,000 pound boat that fills the cargo compartment,” said Phelan. “The MCADS is a specialized airdrop load, which requires experienced and trained loadmasters to ‘be on their game’ to deploy, load, rig, and execute the mission set. It is a very rewarding airdrop to accomplish.”

Phelan added the MCADS increases special operation forces capabilities for multiple mission sets.

“Specifically it allows aerial delivery of naval special operation forces (SOF) insertion and extraction for underway visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS), maritime interdiction, and support for direct action missions among other capabilities,” he said. “The 752nd SOG is ready to execute the MCADS mission in a joint environment to deliver combat power anywhere it is required, and trains its aircrews to a high standard in order to deliver results; anytime, anyplace.”

U.S. Navy Seals followed the MCADS and bundle drop to setup the equipment post in the water. After the RIBs are operational, Danish air commandos performed a static line drop followed by military free-fall from Air Force Air Commandos.

Pickering said, "This exercise allowed our Airmen and their Danish counterparts to practice drops with the MCADS in a controlled environment to enhance our ability to work together and ensure we are successful in a real-world scenario. This type of training is invaluable and only adds to our ability to provide combat air power in a variety of locations and scenarios."

In early 2016, an MC-130J Commando II, along with its five-man crew, navigated the air above a heavily populated area of Afghanistan during daylight hours. Their orders were to deliver a resupply of ammunition and water to troops engaged with enemy forces. Inbound to the drop zone, their mission was interrupted by heavy fire from the ground.

With enemy rounds visible within 10 feet of the ramp, the loadmasters took cover and manually cut the release gate. After the drop, the pilot conducted a rapid climb and maneuvered out of the weapon engagement zone. Although the entire encounter lasted approximately 90 seconds and resulted in a medium-caliber entry hole in the tail section and multiple holes through the rudder of the aircraft, the airdrop was successful.

This story, although specific to Staff Sgts. Joshua Call and Gary Bjerke, both 67th Special Operations Squadron MC-130J instructor loadmasters, is not all that uncommon to members of their profession. Danger aside, the skill and competency of which they perform their duties during these stressful events is the real point of pride.

“You need to have confidence in your job and know how to perform your job in stressful situations. If the rest of the crew isn’t confident in you, that’s a failed link in the chain,” Bjerke said. “If we don’t do this right and don’t have attention to detail, something is going to damage the aircraft, potentially bring the aircraft down or cause a bad airdrop.”

For Staff Sgt. Samuel Haydon, a 67th SOS instructor loadmaster, his ability to perform effectively during a leaflet airdrop that came under fire is directly relatable to realistic training he receives at his home station.

“The key to remember here is how our consistent, realistic and practical home station training kicked in immediately when a real life-threatening scenario arose,” Haydon said. “Everything we’ve been taught and learned through ground training, simulations and in-flight practicing became instinct in a time of true danger.”

Being able to react professionally under pressure is not only something these Airmen are trained to do, it’s a necessity.

Aside from the training and skill needed to perform during these types of events, the key to being a successful MC-130J loadmaster starts before the aircraft even leaves the ground.

“Prior to loading, we’re going to inspect the load and ensure it is safe to drop and safe to put on the aircraft. Once we inspect, we load that piece of equipment, position it to ensure the weight and balance (are) good and then start rigging procedures,” Bjerke said. “The rigging procedures are pretty extensive, and that’s where loadmasters pride themselves.”

Loadmasters are essential in many areas, from performing cargo and personnel airdrops to helicopter aerial refueling and supervising forward arming refueling point operations.

“My role on the MC-130J is to supervise the upload and download of cargo onto the aircraft, conduct airdrops, infiltration/exfiltration, FARP, helicopter aerial refueling and assist, should any emergency procedures arise in flight,” Bjerke said. “Operationally, most of this is done at night.”

Attention to detail, confidence, patience, maturity and the ability to multitask are just a few of the characteristics these instructor loadmasters stated were essential to performing their job safely and effectively.

“Sometimes there’s chaos in the back of an aircraft -- whether it be cargo or people -- and you’re trying to load things due to weight and balance purposes,” Call said. “If there were any

sort of mistakes, it could create unstable flight characteristics for the pilots. Aircrew, passengers, troops we're supporting on the ground -- we have a lot of lives in our hands."

Although some personality traits are characteristic of those seeking to be loadmasters, much of what made these instructors who they are falls to experience, mentorship and consistent training.

"I've really enjoyed this job and feel it has really grown me as a person and as an Airman," Haydon said. "It's made me more confident, more assertive, and I think the multitasking piece has also been huge, teaching me how to work multiple issues and problems at one time."

Regardless of the challenges associated with their profession, being an MC-130J loadmaster is a job that these Airmen love.

"There is no question, being a loadmaster has given me the opportunity to travel to amazing places and see parts of the world I never would have before – some safe, some not, some fun, some difficult," Haydon said. "But, just being able to meet new people, experience new places and new cultures has been an incredible opportunity in my career. It's been a great mix of challenges, mentally and physically."

USAF Unit Histories
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Sources

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